

Contributions

SEED GROWING

A. J. HIXSON

We have many references in God's word to "the seed," "to the sower," and also, to the sowing. In Matt. 13; Mark 4, and Luke 8, we have the Parable of the Savior comparing the kingdom of heaven to a sower that went forth to sow his seed. In all these instances, the facts and explanations are the same. We also have in connection with this sowing, or with the sower, another character engaged showing a different kind of seed. Hence the importance of knowing what kind of seed is being sown. In Gal. 6: 7, 8, we are taught that "whatsoever a man soweth that shall he reap. For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting." Here we learn plainly that every one is sowing seed unto life or unto death. Which am I sowing? should be the honest inquiry of every intelligent person. In the 126 Psalm 6 verse, we have the "seed sower," most beautifully presented in a spirited way. The return of God's people from captivity inspired them with praise and rejoicing, and it was this spirit, moving the Psalmist, when he said "He that goeth forth, and weepeth, bearing precious seed," shall doubtless come again with rejoicing bringing his sheaves with him. The thought in this quotation has often been impressed upon my mind in the past forty years of ministerial life, and some reflections regarding it may do some of the readers of the EVANGELIST family good. Doubtless the bearer of precious seed here means the servant of God, called, qualified, skilled, for all that the office of sower in this relation implies. "The precious seed, certainly is the seed of the kingdom or the word of God, the truth as it is in Jesus. It may well be called precious because of its origin, originating with God, and because we have nothing like it. But the one Gospel for the salvation of a lost world—the instrument of our regeneration, the means of our sanctification, the inspiration of all holy effort. "He goeth forth" seeking fields for sowing, he does not wait for men or nations to seek it. Missionary in all its characteristics seeking the lost and offering salvation in Christ's dear name. "Goeth forth weeping." To deal with lost souls, to win them, in the face of all opposition, in view of his own weakness, well may he say with Paul, "who is sufficient for these things." Not in his own strength but in the name and strength of the Lord Jesus, cheerfully, zealously, diligently and perseveringly, "instant in season and out of season" till life is ended and the crown is won, tho he weepeth over the great responsibility, the numerous disappointments, his weakness and insufficiency, he must not give up. "Wo is me if I preach not the gospel." The precious seed must be sowed.

"He shall doubtless come again with rejoicing bringing his sheaves with him" at the close of the day of life to his Lord and Master, to deliver up his account, surrender his charge, and to await his reward. "He has fought a good fight," reached the goal, gained "the crown of life," rejoicing in that he has not labored in vain; some seed has fallen on good ground.

Let us rejoice fellow-laborers that in the great day of final reckoning we will bring our sheaves with us, all whom we have begotten in the gospel through "weeping" shall be presented before God as our crown of rejoicing. Let us patiently wait the rejoicing time, continue seed sowing in Jesus name till we are called up higher.

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Loyal Preaching

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When God calls a young man to preach for him he calls only such an one as he knows will loyally herald the truth which is presented to him in the Bible. If God were as short-sighted and defective as men are he might make mistakes in regard to the men whom he calls into the ministry, selecting some who would not loyally preach the gospel; but, being all-wise and perfectly acquainted with all men, he chooses such ones as he knows will do his bidding. They, therefore, who are disloyal in preaching cannot claim that they are commissioned by God to preach. I will admit that even one who was at first loyal to God in his preaching may depart from it thru the pressure of great temptation, and yet have a desire to be true to God. He may be ensnared for a season by the wiles of the devil; but it seems to me that if he be at heart a true servant of God he will soon return to a loyal service for his Lord. Rev. Dr. Robert F. Sample of New York, in a letter in the Presbyterian Journal, says: "There are many ministers of Christ, godly, prayerful, consecrated men, who have not yielded to the real or supposed demand for an emasculated gospel, a sentiment that would have the pulpit so magnify the love of God as to obscure his justice and present a one-sided view of the divine character, such as encourages thoughtlessness, worldliness, disbelief, sin. Yet it must be admitted that the pulpit has too often lost its strength and fruitfulness in an accommodation to mistaken views of the functions of the ministry and an aversion to the sterner doctrines by which come a knowledge of sin and of exposure to punishment,—facts which must have their place with due regard to the proposition of truth in every ministry that would save souls from death. It may be that the generation just departed failed to emphasize some of the precious things of the gospel and dwelt too much on its darker aspects, but even that extreme was better than that of the present." Yes, a great deal better. But real loyalty to the great central doctrines of the Bible does not necessarily consist in emphasizing the stern aspects of those doctrines,

yet it does consist in holding to them, mingling them with the more genial phases of gospel truth. Loyal preaching must necessarily include the declaring to sinners the great peril which they are in, and also the truth that unless they repent they will be forever debarred from heaven. Loyalty to God means loyalty to the very highest welfare of all classes of hearers.

PULPIT ECHOES

Pitching Tent Toward Sodom

Life is a pilgrimage. Each morning we break camp and move thru new scenes, and amid new trials. At night we pitch our tent one day nearer our final destiny. At the close of each day we are the more fixed in character, and character is the measure of fate. What we are determines where we shall spend eternity. We become fixed in character by our daily choosings.

Look at the final chapter in the lives of Lot and Abraham. The latter at Hebron enjoying peace and prosperity bearing the finest of all titles, "The friend of God." Lot fleeing from Sodom as an escaped felon from his cell, without property, without friends excepting his two daughters, whose lives are corrupted by the associations of Sodom. Contrast the conditions. Loss and gain; sorrow and joy; pain and pleasure; shame and honor; despair and hope. Sodom a type of sin when finished; Hebron that of the fruits of righteousness.

Lot did not reach Sodom the first day after separating from Abraham. He simply pitched tent in that direction. There is a terrible gravity about sin. When once facing toward Sodom we will soon be drawn there by the gravity of the place. No young man chooses at once to be a drunkard, a defaulter, a thief or a gambler. No one cares to fill a prison cell or hang upon the gallows. How then do men get there? By looking upon sin with allowance. Lot gave little heed to Sodom.

He thought only of the beauty and fertility of the plain. So men thinking only of ease and pleasure, and worldly profit take no account of sin until in its power.

Some places where young men pitch tent in their progress toward Sodom.

1. Neglect of home associations and pastimes. Mother's apron string is a terror to many a youth. But if there is one truth more plainly written in the history of great and noble men it is that they were mother's boys and were not ashamed of mother's restraints. God gave you a mother and he gave her a mother's fear of sin. Both are for your guidance. To resist her is to resist God. The first step toward Sodom is to break away from a Christian home and its influences.

2. Forsaking the Sunday School and engaging in Sunday desecration. One of the strongest safeguards to good morals is broken down when a young man forsakes the Sunday School and willfully engages in base ball, hunting, or even lounging around the street.

3. The parting from honest labor.

A large percentage of crime is committed